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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-10 /025 W
----------109500 201948Z /41
P R 201900Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO USINFO WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4246

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 2062

FOR PGM/RC, AR, PGM/PPL, VOA

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PANAMA CANAL TREATY

1. SANTO DOMINGO DAILIES COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON SENATE APPROVAOF PANAMA CANAL TREATY.

2. PRESTIGIOUS MORNING DAILY LISTIN DIARIO APRIL 19 SAID: "RATIFICATION IS A HISTORIC TRIUMPH OF GOOD SENSE. IT HONORS THE UNITED STATES. AND IT SATISFIES A FAIR RECOVERY FOR PANAMA, FOUGHT TENECIOUSLY AND INDEFATIGABLY, SUPPORTED BY ALL THE NATIONS OF THE HEMISPHERE.

3. "THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT GAIIN SYMPHATHY NOR APPRECIATION AMONG LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS FOR IT. ANTI-U.S. SENTIMENT WILL CONTINUE IN OUR COUNTRIES. IT PRODUCES VERY GOOD POLITICAL DIVIDENS FOR BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT.

4. "BUT A WORK OF JUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE, SOMETHING THAT IN GREAT POWERS REQUIRES A GREAT DEAL OF COURAGE TO DO, SINCE REASONS OF SECURITY AND NATIONAL PRESTIGE WERE ADVANCED AGAINST IT. PRESIDENT CARTER'S FIERCE FIGHT FOR APPROVAL OF THE TREATIES, BY ENDING IN TRIUMPH, WILL STRENGTHEN HIS INTERNAL POLITICAL PRESTIGE."

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5. OTHER LARGE MORNING DAILY EL CARIBE APRIL 20 WROTE: "IT IS STILL PREMATURE TO JUDGE THE HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF THE TREATY, THERE IS NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH SURROUNDED THE CANAL FROM THE BEGINNING OF ITS HISTORY MADE IT VERY APT FOR RHETORICAL EXERCISES AND OUTBURSTS OF EMOTION WHOSE POLES WERE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, ON ONE HAND, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ON THE OTHER.

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6. "WE HOPE, NEVERTHELESS, THAT THE PRONOUNCEMENTS ARE TRANSLATED INTO POSITIVE ACTIONS AND THAT THE SIGNING AND RATIFICATION OF THIS TREATY OPEN A NEW ERA OF BETTER AND FAIRER INTERHEMISPHERIC RELATIONS, AS WELL AS GREATER ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND POLITICAL FREEDOM FOR THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE."

7. EL SOL, LEFTIST-LEANING MORNING TABLOID, SAID: "EVEN WITH THE PRECARIOUS MARGIN OVER AND ABOVE THE REQUIRED TWO-THIRDS, THE DECISION IS HISTORIC AND WILL BE A GESTURE OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HEADED BY JIMMY CARTER.

8. "LITTLE MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THE SENATE SHOWED RECEPTIVITY TO THE DECISION OF THEIR PRESIDENT, ARRIVED AT THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA AND OF CONTINENTAL SOLIDARITY.

9. "THUS WAS REJECTED THE RECALCITRANT POSTION OF THE NORTH AMERICANS WITH 19TH CENTURY THINKING AND COLONIALISTIC PRESUMPTIONS IN 1978, WHO EVEN AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY PRETENDED NOT TO RECOGNIZE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF A SMALL NATION BUT ONE WITH A GREAT SENSE OF DIGNITY."

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